

EMPLOYMENT OF PHYSICALLY HANDI-
CAPPED UNDER CIVIL SERVICE.

George Lavos

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THE EMPLOYMENT OF PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED UNDER CIVIL SERVICE

GEORGE LAVOS

WITHIN RECENT YEARS civil service employment has greatly increased. Not only have new positions been created by the expanding services rendered by the various state, municipal, and federal agencies, but also long existing positions have been brought under the jurisdiction of the service. The problem of employment possibilities for the handicapped under this enlarging employment program assumes added significance at this time. Since an ever increasing proportion of the physically normal are finding suitable work and economic security within the ranks of government employees, the same opportunities may fairly be sought for the handicapped.¹

In the past there have been many complaints about the civil service commissions in their relations to the physically handicapped.² It has been felt that there has been discrimination against the handicapped by the commissions. The present investigation was planned to throw light on this problem by analyzing the personnel recruiting procedures used by civil service commissions, the role of physical and medical requirements, the actual employment of handicapped in civil service positions, and their efficiency in these positions.

In reading this report it will be helpful to bear in mind a fundamental fact. A presenta-

tion of the facts relating to civil service and the handicapped must not be interpreted as an adverse criticism. Civil service developed its procedure and rules apart from the interests of any one group. The very reason for their development was an attempt to overcome partiality for special groups. Civil service commissions set up strict regulations and abided by them in order to prevent any insidious attempts to undermine their impartiality. That the handicapped, a very small minority at best, should have felt keenly the results of the application of impartial rules is unfortunate. The future will see an increasing flexibility in the application of civil service rules as the principles of personnel selection become accepted.

METHODOLOGY

Information upon which this study is based was gathered from various civil service commissions. These commissions included the federal, all the state and county, and many municipal commissions. The information was gathered from these commissions by a questionnaire comprising items relating to job analysis, physical requirements, testing and placement procedures, and actual employment of handicapped persons. The commissions were requested to consider only certain types of positions in the non-custodial, non-labor, and non-guardian classes. It is not feasible to regard handicapped workers as employable in all positions, and to make the study meaningful it was necessary to set such limitations. The responses were reasonably

¹ For details on the expansion in government employment see Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada, *Civil Service Agencies in the United States, a 1940 Census*; Pamphlet No. 16, 1940.

² The term "physically handicapped" in this report refers to the blind, the deaf, the partially sighted, the hard of hearing, the crippled, the cardiac, and the arrested tuberculous.

adequate in coverage of items and detail.

There are a few serious criticisms of a questionnaire study such as this one. In the first place, there can be no check on the truth or falsity of the replies. Since there is no way by which the responses can be checked, full reliance must be placed on honesty of the respondent. In the second place, the responses may not be representative in that those commissions with a favorable or indifferent policy may have tended to report in greater frequency than those which were definitely opposed to the employment of handicapped workers. These limitations must be borne in mind both in reading and in interpreting the report.

THE RESULTS

Fundamental to any employment is the accurate statement of the requirements needed to fulfill the duties of the position. With this the present study begins. The results are presented in terms of the steps gone through to obtain a civil service position. First, the civil service commission's knowledge of the requirements of the job so that a valid test may be constructed; then the taking of the test by candidates under suitable conditions; the candidates' passing of medical and physical examinations; induction into service by a suitable placement; and finally, efficiency on the job.

Job Analysis

Job analysis is the statement of the nature of the position, the type of worker needed, and his possibilities on the job. It covers such facts as the tools used, the activities performed, the hazards, the salary, the promotional and transfer possibilities. A program of job analysis is fundamental to any personnel recruitment.

Few civil service commissions have a continuous program of such analysis. Often the job requirements are made by consultation with departmental heads or supervisors, rather

than through the services of objective examiners. On the other hand those services with careful classification of positions for the purposes of equalizing salaries, and transfer and promotional possibilities do have valid statements of job requirements. However, none of the commissions with job analysis or job classification programs reported that this work was done so as to analyze the placement possibilities for the physically defective.

A recent trend toward higher requirements, both physical and mental, is extremely dangerous to the opportunities for the handicapped in the future. This has been caused by the overwhelming superiority of government employment over private in economic security, which has attracted large sections of the population. Civil service commissions were faced with the task of selecting a few qualified workers from thousands. As a way out of this dilemma, civil service commissions began to establish arbitrary requirements for a great many positions, especially those in the non-technical fields. The task of the commissions had become one of elimination, not selection, and as a result the physical, the mental, the educational, and the experience requirements have been raised.

The handicapped will find it difficult to meet these raised standards. Educationally they are often below the average because of long periods of hospitalization, poor educational facilities, and delayed entrance to school. Physically the requirements are becoming too difficult for them to meet. There will be little to counteract this trend unless employment in non-public organizations becomes considerably more attractive.

Examination Procedures

Upon the basis of an accurate statement of the requirements of the job the verbal or factual examination is made. The handicapped sometimes have some difficulty in taking these written examinations. Some crippled and cardiac find it difficult to climb

stairs in examination buildings. Several civil service commissions have recognized this difficulty and use buildings provided with elevators.

Another examination difficulty is the fact that the blind cannot read and write in the normal way. A few civil service commissions provide readers for the blind or permit them to make their own arrangements for the reading of examination questions. The deaf and the hard of hearing sometimes experience difficulty in following verbal instructions. Some of the orthopedic find it difficult to write speedily and legibly in examinations. At least one commission has made provision for this contingency. The Civil Service Commission of the City of New York furnished a stenographer to a spastic who wished to take a civil service examination for a legal position. Unfortunately, additional time was not granted to permit the stenographer to read back the answers. The man failed to pass the examination by one point. He appealed to the Commission, but the Commission refused to make any allowances. The appeal was then brought to court, and the decision reached was favorable to the handicapped examinee. The court stated that handicapped should have equal opportunity to compete in civil service examinations and a re-examination was ordered. The candidate then passed high enough to be placed on the eligible list. This court decision is far-reaching in its significance since it establishes a legal precedent for equalizing opportunity to compete in civil service examinations. The examination should test the capacity of the examinee to do the job, and the results should not be biased by the operation of such extraneous factors as the limitations due to a physical defect unrelated to the job.

It may be argued that, if the handicapped person cannot take the examination under conditions similar to those imposed upon others, he cannot perform the duties of the position without requiring them to be unduly modified, but this argument has little founda-

tion. Admission to the examination is very often based upon actual job experience. If the handicapped person has obtained the required experience, he should be able to perform the job, other factors being constant. In the case cited, the individual had been employed for some time in the position for which he was taking the examination, and had already secured promotions. He was, therefore, able to perform the duties of the job although he could not take the examination under the same conditions as applied to physically normal individuals.

These difficulties in taking the examinations may seem small and insignificant to some, but many handicapped persons have found that they stood in the way. Full assistance to equalize the examination opportunity should be forthcoming.

Physical and Medical Requirements

In the minds of the handicapped, as well as in the minds of those who have their interests at heart, the presence of physical and medical requirements has been the barrier to the employment of the handicapped. It has been felt that the disabled have not been given a just opportunity, that the requirements have been arbitrary, and that the examiners have not given thought to the functional possibilities of the handicapped.

Physical requirements have been introduced to safeguard efficiency on the job. Medical requirements have been established to avoid excessive absences because of indisposition; to obtain workers unencumbered by low-grade illnesses which adversely affect job-efficiency; and to prevent undue depletion of financial reserves in pension funds. It must be kept in mind that civil service positions are created not for the purpose of giving jobs, but for serving the public. Such requirements as these are therefore needed.

The problem of medical requirements does not directly pertain to this study. A blind or crippled worker with a disease requiring medical attention is not a fully efficient

TABLE I. PHYSICAL DISABILITIES PROHIBITING PLACEMENT ON CIVIL SERVICE POSITIONS AND FREQUENCY OF MENTION BY CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSIONS IN ORDER OF OCCURRENCE

PART A			
Chronic Diseases			
DISEASE	FREQUENCY OF MENTION	DISEASE	FREQUENCY OF MENTION
General chronic disease.....	3	Nervous diseases.....	2
Excessive obesity.....	3	Hernia.....	1
Excessive thinness.....	3	Arteriosclerosis.....	1
Active tuberculosis.....	3	Chancroid.....	1
Communicable diseases.....	2	Progressive paralysis.....	1
Bright's disease.....	2	Exophthalmic goiter.....	1
Malignant cancer.....	2	Locomotor ataxia.....	1
Diabetes.....	2	Third degree flat feet.....	1
Syphilis.....	2	Rheumatism.....	1
Gonorrhea.....	2	Bronchitis.....	1
PART B			
Permanent Defects			
DEFECT	FREQUENCY OF MENTION	DEFECT	FREQUENCY OF MENTION
Orthopedic..... <i>Total</i>	10	Cardiac..... <i>Total</i>	3
Loss of both arms or legs.....	3	Defective heart.....	2
Loss of arm and leg.....	4	Chronic disease thereof.....	1
Seriously deformed.....	3	Auditory..... <i>Total</i>	2
Visual..... <i>Total</i>	5	Total loss of hearing.....	1
Total loss of vision.....	2	Partial loss of hearing ^b	1
Partial loss of vision ^a	3	Tubercular..... <i>Total</i>	1
		Arrested pulmonary.....	1

^aLess than 20/30 vision in one eye; progressive myopia. ^bInability to hear spoken voice at more than 20 feet.

worker, and placement for him is not sought. On the other hand, a worker who has lost his vision, or his hearing, or some limb, is not necessarily unemployable, although many commissions in their formal and informal requirements consider him so. It is necessary, therefore, to study further the relation between employment opportunities for the handicapped under civil service and specific requirements of physical fitness.

Nearly 60 per cent of the commissions which responded to the questionnaire reported that the basic physical requirement is fitness to perform the duties of the position. If the person appears to the appointing officer to be able to do the work, he is acceptable. This does not militate to any great extent against the employment of handicapped workers but it does permit the persistence of biased opinions which have been formed by evaluating the work capacity of the handicapped person

on the basis of his appearance.³ Approximately 40 per cent of the commissions reporting require an examination by a doctor affiliated with the commission. Such doctors are probably selected because of their efficiency as general practitioners. Only a medical-vocational specialist, however, can understand the functional possibilities of the various defects in vision, in orthopedic difficulties, etc. For this reason the examination is biased by the medical examiner's lack of information as to the potentialities which remain even after a defect has severely damaged the individual.

³ Many physical defects, notably orthopedic and visual, are appearance defects. Very often the very appearance of the damages wrought by the defect seems, in the mind of the layman, to preclude all opportunity for work, and many with such disabilities are refused employment because their defect *appears* severe. The judgment of work capacity must not be based upon appearance alone, as those who work in the rehabilitation of the tuberculous have discovered. Judgment of work capacity is a task for specialists.

The data in Table I indicate the various prohibiting disabilities sought for in the examination. The data are divided into two parts, the chronic diseases and those disabilities which are the special topic of this study. There are several observations of value to be made from these data. The nature of the diseases ranges widely medically, and the frequency per disability is small. Medically they range from excessive obesity and excessive thinness to third-degree flat feet, from malignant cancer to locomotor ataxia. The frequency of mention ranges from three to one, and the majority were mentioned only once. If valid work had been done in establishing these lists, there should be greater frequency per disease and more diseases pertinent to employment.

The mention by the commissions of the various permanent defects to which this study is limited indicates the lack of understanding on the part of the civil service officials of the functional possibilities present in spite of such defects. Evidence of this is found in the fact that there are hundreds of men and women with such defects who are self-supporting in positions similar to those under civil service.

In addition to these prohibitive disabilities it must be recalled that the medical examiner is free to use his discretion to reject individuals for defects he considers too severe. The chances are that he would be conservative and reject doubtful cases.

A definite need exists for the recognition of the fact that *these defects are not prohibitive for all jobs. The defect must always be considered in relation to the specific duties of the position.* This is a fundamental principle in all the vocational rehabilitation carried on by nearly every state and the federal government, which should be adopted by our public personnel-recruiting agencies.

Since the beginning of the present national emergency the Federal Civil Service Commission has changed its physical requirements somewhat. It will now place individuals in civil service positions who have a physical

condition which would ordinarily disbar them. This placement, however, is only for the duration of the emergency caused by the war. Threatened or actual shortage may force all commissions as well as private employers to hire the less desirable.

Placement in Civil Service Positions

If the handicapped person has been able to take the written examination with no undue hardship, and has passed both that and the physical examination, and has been placed high enough on the eligible register, then he may be called for placement. Placement is another hurdle. The handicapped person may be rejected for any particular position because the duties may be thought to be, or may actually be, too demanding.⁴ On the other hand, he may be placed in a position without due regard for the limitations of his defect, with resulting loss in work-efficiency. Either alternative is obviously unjust, and both may be overcome by the simple expedient of having specialists in the vocational adjustment of the handicapped act as special advisory councils in placement of handicapped persons under civil service. Only such specialists know the possibilities and the limitations of any given defect, and only they can authoritatively say whether or not the duties of a given position are too exacting.

Such specialists are readily available. Nearly every state has a vocational rehabilitation service. There are many commissions for the blind and crippled. Throughout the larger cities of the United States there are many private organizations interested in the economic welfare of the different groups of handicapped persons. Most of these agencies have on their staffs experts in the vocational adjustment of the handicapped. These vocational specialists could form advisory councils for civil service

⁴ Being on the eligible list and being called for a position does not invariably mean appointment. The appointing officer has the right usually to choose one of several who have been certified to him as eligible. This system permits adjustment for personality, appearance and other intangibles.

TABLE II. PHYSICAL DEFECTS, POSITIONS AVAILABLE, AND NUMBER OF COMMISSIONS REPORTING SUCH POSITIONS AS ALLOTTED ONLY TO SPECIFIED HANDICAPPED

DEFECT	POSITION	NUMBER OF COMMISSIONS
Blindness	Dictaphone-stenographer.....	3
	Teacher in school for blind.....	1
	Social worker with blind.....	2
	Placement assistant with blind.....	1
	<i>Total</i>	7
Partial vision	Placement assistant with blind.....	1
	Janitor of workshop for blind.....	2
	Saleswoman of workshop products.....	1
	Social worker with blind.....	2
	<i>Total</i>	6
Deafness	Teacher in school for deaf.....	1
	Counselor in school for deaf.....	1
	Housemother in school for deaf.....	1
	Janitress in school for deaf.....	1
	Laborer in school for deaf.....	1
	Student waiter in school for deaf.....	1
	Student waitress in school for deaf.....	1
	<i>Total</i>	7
Orthopedic	Elevator operator.....	1
	<i>Total</i>	1
Physically defective	Stenographer in rehabilitation office.....	1
	<i>Total</i>	1

commissions for their respective areas and localities.

Actually, however, very few of the civil service commissions have called upon outside specialists for assistance in placing the handicapped. Two commissions indicated that specialists were so used, one for hearing cases only and the other for all cases in which any doubt exists as to the employability. The former uses a doctor, the latter the state supervisor of vocational rehabilitation. In this way expert advice is available; and unfairness, either to the handicapped person or to the standards of efficiency of the service, is avoided.

No commission reported that it had a specialist on its own staff. This is to be expected for practically all the work of civil service commissions has to do with physically normal applicants. The handicapped form too small a minority to justify the employment of such specialists on the staffs of the commissions.

Availability of Positions

A few civil service commissions have

initiated a program of assigning special positions to the handicapped. Physically normal applicants are not eligible for these positions, but only those with specified physical defects. Table II contains the available information on this program. In comparison with the total number of positions under civil service, there are few positions for which only the handicapped are eligible. Practically all these few positions are limited to those in agencies serving the handicapped in some way. The basic authorization for these positions should be worded as Massachusetts has done it:

Preference (should be given) to blind persons in the employment, by any state department, board or commission in the office or offices of which dictating machines are used, of typists to take dictation solely from such machines.⁵

Such an authorization enables the commission to undertake placement of handicapped workers on a much broader basis than merely in one or two positions in agencies serving the handicapped.

⁵ Department of Civil Service and Registration, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, *Civil Service Laws and Rules*, p. 2.

A total of twenty-two positions has been assigned to the handicapped throughout the United States by civil service commissions. The number of actual placement possibilities represented by these specially assigned positions is in excess of twenty-two for, in several instances, such as the jobs of elevator operator, and social worker with the blind, more than one placement is possible. All but one of these positions were assigned to those with sensory defects, one position was specially allotted to the orthopedic, and none were assigned to the tuberculous and the cardiac. This is in inverse relation to the employment potentialities of the various types of handicapped. Job analysis surveys have disclosed that the cardiac and the arrested tuberculous have the widest possibilities; and the blind, the least.

In all probability the extension of this procedure of specially allotting positions in civil service to the handicapped, would meet with general approval. It would be suggested then, that, by this means the number of positions would be increased; and placement opportunities, in departments other than those serving the handicapped, would be broadened.

On the other hand this procedure is indicative of the existence of discrimination against, or, at best, indifference to, the employment of handicapped persons under civil service. If eligibility rested *solely* on ability to perform work, then there would be no need for these specially allotted positions because the handicapped would be considered eligible along with the normal. For this reason an increase in such assigned positions is not recommended. What is recommended is very simple—namely, the establishment of reasonable and specific requirements for individual positions. This, and this alone, is all that is needed to admit handicapped persons to civil service. The handicapped do not ask for special provisions; they ask only equal opportunity.

Employment of Handicapped

The reports contain little information on

the actual employment of handicapped person in civil service positions, and still less as to the efficiency of such workers. Table III presents the information on the various types of defect and the number of commissions reporting individuals employed with these defects.

TABLE III. NUMBER OF COMMISSIONS REPORTING EMPLOYMENT OF INDIVIDUALS WITH STATED DEFECTS, ARRANGED IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY

DEFECT	NUMBER OF COMMISSIONS
Orthopedic.....	13
Partial vision.....	10
Hard of Hearing.....	9
Arrested tuberculous.....	6
Blind.....	5
Deaf.....	4
Cardiac.....	4

In Table IV the number of commissions reporting specific employment is presented as to both defect and type of position. These data are extremely limited and represent only information *known to the executive who filled out the questionnaire*. There are probably more commissions employing the various types of handicapped workers and there are probably more positions filled by handicapped persons than indicated in the two tabulations. Pertinent information on these points is not usually available in the records in civil service offices, and the civil service commissions, restricted in funds and personnel, cannot be expected to carry on special studies of the small group of handicapped. The data, limited as they are, must be accepted for the present.

The orthopedic are represented most frequently in employment under civil service positions (probably because the defect is visible and so easily remembered). The partially sighted, the hard of hearing, the arrested tuberculous, and others follow in the order named. The data in Table IV indicate that the position of general clerk is most frequently reported as that in which handicapped persons are actually employed.

TABLE IV. NUMBER OF COMMISSIONS REPORTING EMPLOYMENT OF HANDICAPPED IN SPECIFIC POSITIONS, CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO DEFECT AND POSITION

DEFECT	TYPES OF POSITIONS		MISCELLANEOUS
	GENERAL CLERK	TYPIST AND STENOGRAPHER	
Orthopedic.....	5	2	1 garage attendant 1 social worker
Partially sighted.....	3	0	0
Hard of hearing.....	3	0	1 laborer 1 draftsman
Arrested tuberculous.....	2	1	1 doctor in sanatorium
Blind.....	0	1	1 social worker
Deaf.....	0	0	1 auditor
Cardiac.....	0	0	0

The data in these tables do indicate that there are handicapped persons employed in civil service positions and that their employment is limited neither to one group of defectives nor to one type of position. This bears out the facts known about the employment of the handicapped in general: first, that all types of handicapped persons are employable, other conditions being equal; and, second, that employment opportunities are not limited to a few traditional occupations such as printing for the deaf, weaving for the blind, and watch repairing for the crippled.

There is no information as to the actual number of handicapped workers employed under civil service. Only one state, California, made a survey of the handicapped employed in positions under civil service.⁶ According to this survey approximately 5.7 per cent of the employees in civil service are handicapped in the sense employed in this study. Table V contains the pertinent data on the types of defects reported by the state employees. The most frequent type of defects reported is orthopedic, constituting half of the handicapped group. The orthopedic, the hard of hearing, and the partially sighted, total 90 per cent of the group.

The largest proportion of the handicapped is employed in the state's professional service; the next largest group, in the crafts and labor

service; the next, in administrative and clerical; and the smallest number, in the policy-making group.

This information, although extremely limited in scope and detail, does indicate that civil service regulations have not been an insurmountable barrier in one state.

Efficiency of Handicapped under Civil Service

It is unfortunate that no information can be given showing the actual work-efficiency of the handicapped. There have been no studies by civil service commissions on such items as the productivity, the wastage of work materials, the speed, the accuracy, the absences, etc. of handicapped as compared with physically normal civil service workers. The best evidence that can be presented lies in the general reactions of the civil service commissions to the employment of handicapped workers.

TABLE V. PERCENTAGES OF STATE EMPLOYEES IN CALIFORNIA REPORTING SPECIFIED DEFECTS ARRANGED IN ORDER OF FREQUENCY.*

DEFECTS	PERCENTAGE	
	OF TOTAL HANDICAPPED	CUMULATIVE PERCENTAGE
Orthopedic.....	52.8	52.8
Hard of hearing.....	20.9	73.7
Partially sighted.....	16.6	90.3
Cardiac.....	5.2	95.5
Arrested tuberculous.	2.5	98.0
Deaf.....	1.7	99.7
Blind.....	.3	100.0

⁶ Department of Education, State of California, *A Survey of Physically Handicapped in State Service in California*, Bulletin No. 8, 1935.

* Data calculated by investigator from material in Department of Education, State of California, *op. cit.*, Bulletin No. 8, 1935, Table II.

The following are quotations from the reports received:

"Experience with handicapped [is] limited but sufficient to prove that their intelligence and willingness to work offset the disadvantages of their physical defects."—*Civil Service Commission of Miami, Florida*.

"Presumably are satisfactory employees."—*Civil Service Commission of the City and County of San Francisco, California*.

"We have many persons in the service who are physically handicapped, particularly those in a crippled condition or with arrested tuberculosis. A general observation will be that their capacity as workers in [office and clerical] positions . . . has been satisfactory."—*Civil Service Commission of Los Angeles County, California*.

"It is believed that where they [the handicapped] have been employed their services have been usually satisfactory. The person with a physical handicap, bearing in mind the limitation to his employment field, is often desirous of showing that he can perform satisfactory duties."—*Civil Service Commission of the United States*.

"In each case special adjustments to working conditions and duties to be performed seem to be necessary. It takes patience and understanding to work out such adjustments."—*Personnel Department, State of Connecticut*.

"We have generally found that these persons [the handicapped] are not well adjusted in personality make-up. They too frequently interpret general departmental regulations, if they apply to them [the handicapped], in terms of 'personal persecutions.'"—*Civil Service Commission of Milwaukee County, Wisconsin*.

These indicate the reactions of various civil service commissions to the employment of handicapped. The general picture is favorable. Only two indicated that there was some difficulty with this special group. The study on the handicapped in state employment in California concludes as follows:

. . . It has been indicated that the handicapped employees are retaining their positions and are receiving wages and salaries comparable to those received by other state employees. They are employed in all services and in a wide variety of positions. There is nothing to indicate that their

services are unsatisfactory or that they are in any way differentiated from other state employees. These facts are proof of the feasibility and practicability of employing handicapped persons in state service.⁷

There is no valid basis at the present time for refusing to employ handicapped in state service. The fact that they are successfully employed is evidence that they can render satisfactory service. This fact should encourage an ever increasing extension of civil service opportunity to the handicapped by other commissions which follow the example of California.

Pension Schemes and the Handicapped

The growth of pension schemes for old age, for illness, and for permanent disability, not only in civil service but also in private employment, is bringing to the front a new problem, a problem which is going to have a more vital significance in the employment of handicapped workers as such pension programs increase in scope and number. The problem is simple in nature: the handicapped, if they have a morbidity or mortality rate higher than that expected on the basis of normal individuals, will constitute an untoward drain on the financial reserves of the pension funds. The handicapped may be prone to become ill more frequently and more seriously; they may be liable to become totally disabled more easily; their life span may be shorter.

One civil service commission which did not fill out the questionnaire recognized this possibility in excusing itself:

" . . . employment is tied up with retirement provisions predicated on original capacity for the performance of duties indicating rather an extensive expectancy of service."—*Civil Service Commission of the City of Norfolk, Virginia*.

The United States Civil Service Commission has recently added the following to its an-

⁷ Department of Education, State of California, *op. cit.*, Bulletin No. 8, 1935, p. 13.

nouncements of positions under "Physical Ability":

"Diseases or physical defects sufficient . . . to constitute an undue retirement hazard will disqualify for appointment."

The problem is not theoretical. It apparently constitutes a practical obstacle in the way of handicapped persons who seek civil service positions.

The data available on the mortality of the handicapped indicate that the handicapped do have a death rate higher than expected (upon the basis of physically normal individuals).⁸ This fact cannot be refuted, especially since the rates are based on studies for insurance companies. The individuals were highly selected as regards their general health apart from their defects, their economic status (practically all insurance companies require that handicapped be self-supporting), and their general insurability. A consistent picture was given; the death rates of various groups of handicapped were practically all higher than expected upon the basis of the American Mortality Tables.

There is a danger, therefore, that the handicapped may die before contributing sufficiently to the pension fund, and thus cause a special drain when their beneficiaries draw the pensions.

There are no available studies on the morbidity of blind, deaf, crippled, or other handicapped groups, but some valid assumptions can be made. Medically there are two kinds of resistances, specific for given diseases and general or constitutional. It may be that the general resistance (in addition to specific resistance) of the handicapped may be lower than normal. For example, deafness and the common cold have a mutual meeting ground in the diseases of the middle ear and Eustachian tube. The tuberculous have a low gen-

eral resistance, which is one of the reasons for their breaking down. There are many general systemic diseases which cause eye defects. A cardiac impairment may be caused by low general resistance. There are no available studies on this problem, and before an unequivocal statement can be made, such studies will be necessary. The above assumptions, though, have some validity and indicate a possibility that the morbidity rate of handicapped persons is higher than that of normal individuals.

If the pension program includes illness provisions, the handicapped participants may withdraw more than their contributions warrant, and reserves may be unduly depleted.

The handicapped may be prone to become permanently disabled for employment to a greater degree than expected. For example, a person with arrested tuberculosis is likely to break down again easily. His recovery may not be complete enough to ever permit him again to work a full day. Under many pension programs such an individual would be entitled to pension for life.

These threats to the employment of the handicapped, assuming that the handicapped do have a higher than normal morbidity rate and recalling the higher than normal mortality rate, may be overcome in five ways. First, the handicapped may be permitted to waive their rights to a pension. Precedent has been established, for waivers have been used to meet other similar problems in the employment of handicapped.⁹ The injustice of this procedure may be overcome by having the government pay from its general funds, obtained by taxes, fines, and charges for services, the special costs which may be incident to the coverage of handicapped workers in the pension program. This proposal would be in harmony with the precedent established by the creation of second injury funds in

⁸ For the available rates, a discussion of the nature of the data and original sources see Lavos, George, "Industrial Group Life Insurance and the Physically Handicapped," *Outlook for the Blind*, 34: 1940: 135-38.

⁹ For the nature, scope and function of waivers see Lavos, George, "Waiving Compensation Rights," *Outlook for the Blind*, 32: 1938: 128-32.

workmen's compensation.¹⁰ Another method would require that the pension granted be based solely on the amount paid into the fund, or that contributions be made for a minimum number of years before any pension can be drawn. Another method would be the "rating up" of handicapped persons as is done, in many instances, in individual insurance, so that the defective would contribute more than normally in order to overcome their special drain. The fifth answer to the problems, however, is exceedingly simple and involves no adjustment for coverage of the handicapped even if their morbidity and mortality rates are higher than normal. It lies in recognition of the fact that the small number of handicapped workers will be outweighed by the overwhelmingly larger number of non-handicapped, and that demands on the reserves will not be excessive. The United States Civil Service Commission has stated, relative to the higher-than-expected death rates of the handicapped:

"Therefore, if the death rates of the group . . . is above normal, the group is too small for its condition to be reflected in the scheme of this (pension) system."¹¹

The death rates do not affect the program to any appreciable extent because the number of handicapped is too small, and this fact applies to all pension schemes. If the number of handicapped is small and the total number of civil service employees large, there is no problem.

The threat that pension provisions may constitute to the employment of handicapped under civil service can be overcome either by changes in the law or by keeping the number of handicapped a very small proportion of the total covered by the pension.

¹⁰ For the nature and purpose of these funds see Lavos, George, "Legal Provisions for Second Injuries under the Workmen's Compensation Laws," *Outlook for the Blind*, 34: 1940: 155-63.

¹¹ Personal communication with the U. S. Civil Service Commission, May 3, 1939.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Civil service regulations have not proved to be an insurmountable barrier in the way of the handicapped. There is evidence that handicapped are employed in civil service positions and are rendering satisfactory service. There are conditions existent which make it difficult for all handicapped workers to have equal opportunity under public employment; but these conditions can be remedied by simple changes in the administration, and, in some cases, the law, of civil service. This investigation has amply proved that the physically handicapped can work under civil service rules and that their efficiency is as great as that of any other worker. It is essential that public personnel administrators accept the simple idea that the basic consideration is *the defect in relation to job requirements, and not the simple prohibition of all handicapped workers regardless of the duties of the particular job.*

The recommended steps will not create special opportunities for the handicapped, but they will create equal opportunity. Concessions which do more than equalize opportunity will not, in the long run, be to the advantage of the handicapped. The specially allotted positions described in the preceding pages are not advisable; they may be regarded as instances of favoritism. Their justification at the present time is that they serve to demonstrate the fact that handicapped persons can work in civil service positions without undermining its efficiency. The future should see no need for the continuation of these demonstrations. The most desirable procedure would be to permit the handicapped to take examinations, to lessen arbitrary physical requirements, and to place eligible handicapped workers in jobs suited to their abilities. If this were done, there would be no need for specially allotted positions.

It is recommended that the following proposals be considered in outlining a campaign to open civil service to the handicapped:

1. That job analyses of positions under civil service should make provision for the feasibility of employing handicapped on the jobs;

2. That every effort be made to equalize the testing of handicapped persons so that the interference of extraneous factors be at the minimum;

3. That physical requirements, like experience and mental requirements, should be based on job analysis to the end that they may be selective rather than eliminative, and hence arbitrary;

4. That medical examinations of the defects should be carried on by appropriate specialists who know the possibilities and the limitations of the defects;

5. That in the placement of handicapped workers, where doubt exists as to the individual's suitability for the job, specialists in the vocational adjustment of the handicapped should be consulted so that the decision may be in keeping with the limitations and potentialities of the individual;

6. That, if the handicapped should prove to be an unprovided-for drain on pension funds, pension schemes should be made flexible enough to admit of one of the modifications proposed, preferably the proposal that the state pay out of its general funds the difference between the amount contributed by the handicapped worker and the total cost of the pensions.

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